

Windows 8 for existing Windows Users – reducing the swearing

Windows 8 (W8) is a major change by Microsoft to a new user interface. For people who have become comfortable with the earlier versions of Windows the change can be confronting. To make the change you need to do some 'unlearning'. Hopefully these notes will help.

Q. Am I about to upgrade? No. Windows 7 is doing everything I want.

Q. How did W8 feel? It works; it's fast; it's confusing for 'stuck in the W7 mud' users like me; it feels MS have tried to have a bet each way on a new interface and haven't pulled either off very well.

Q. Would I recommend it? For new computerists it should be fine as they won't have to 'unlearn' anything. Besides nearly all new PC's are being sold with W8 anyway so sooner or later us 'stick in the mud' people will have to change.

Q. So what tips do I have for us old fogies?

Note that Ws = The Windows key (the one with the flag symbol); Ws+D = hold the Windows key and tap the D key

1. Understand that there are 2 major 'system' screens:
 - Start Screen which displays 'tiles'. This screen scrolls horizontally. The Ws key toggles between the Start Screen and the most recent screen you've been using. (Think of tiles as something like shortcuts. The tiles can be active so they are constantly updating although you can turn this off. I find updating as useful and annoying as flashing adverts)
 - Desktop Screen which looks exactly like the old Windows screen with shortcuts and a taskbar, but NO Start button or menus. Ws+D key will open the Desktop.
2. The corners of the monitor are always active:
 - bottom left icon takes you to the Start Screen (Ws)
 - top left shows the most recent open window you accessed. Scrolling down reveals what other windows you have open. Just click the relevant icon to go to that window. Right click to close a window
 - top and bottom right corners display the 'Charms' panel or sidebar (Ws+I). I can't find too much that's 'charming' about it.
 - active corners can be annoying - for eg you have a Word document open full screen then every time you go to use a command in the corner then the active popup appears. No doubt one would adapt - sigh!
3. The Charms panel has:
 - Search - see below
 - Share - supposed to be like Copy and Paste
 - Start - takes you to the above Start screen
 - Devices - details and settings for items connected to the computer.
 - Settings has computer settings relevant to either the Start Screen or the Desktop Screen. For eg it will only show Control Panel if you get the settings panel from the Desktop Screen or a traditional program like Word
4. W8 seems to run two types of programs - the traditional programs we are used to and 'Apps'. I'm still confused about this. One annoyance was using the Ebay App - it only searches the US Ebay listings and I haven't figured out how to change it to Australia. Maybe it needed me to log in. Another was that some Apps do not seem to have a close button, instead you grab them from the top edge and drag them all the way to the bottom of the screen - very tedious

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5. The search facilities are very fast and pretty easy to use.
 - Either use the Search tool on the Charms bar, the keyboard commands below, or simply go to the Start Screen and just start typing. Either way opens the search page.
 - Bleedingly obvious I know, but know the words to search for!! eg 'Control Panel', 'Word'.
 - On the right of the search page there are 3 major search 'settings' of Apps, Settings and Files, then followed by a heap such as ebay, Maps, Bing etc.
 - Pay attention to these search 'settings'.. Eg search won't find lower level items such as 'Device Manager' or 'Mouse' unless you select 'Settings'. The same when searching for Files
 - It even locates files that have that text within them (unfortunately it doesn't highlight it when you open that file but one can't have everything). Make sure to use double quotes if searching for a phrase in a file.
 - These keyboard commands are helpful: Search Apps (Ws+Q); Search Settings (Ws+W); Search Files (Ws+F)
6. The Windows 8 tutorials and videos at GCFLearn are very good. Make sure to go through them at www.gcflearnfree.org/windows8 If you want, the videos are easily downloadable from their YouTube versions. I just use a free Add In for Chrome, there are several available.

A couple of the things that annoyed me:

- W8 starts and displays the completely useless 'lock screen'. Simply click to get the user logon screen (how to get rid of the lock screen is at www.extremetech.com/computing/142482-how-to-disable-the-windows-8-lock-screen)
- No Start button and menu. You can get free add ins that will reinstate a Start menu but I haven't tried them. The search facility is really very fast and is probably the best replacement for the Start menu as it saves having to search through a large Start menu.
- The right click menu that I LOVE seems to be disappearing, certainly with Apps. For eg to close an App, as mentioned above you have to drag it to the bottom of the screen, right clicking does little. However right clicking on its thumbnail on the left side of the screen gives a Close command. \$%%\$@!

I hope all of this is of help. Make sure to check the GCFLearn modules as there are plenty of other tips there.

Below are some keyboard commands to cut off and blu-tack on the side of your screen, or near it, until you know them.

Ws=Windows Key (flag)		Open	Keys
		Home Screen	Ws
			Ws+
		Desktop Screen	D
		Charms Menu	C
		Search Apps	Q
		Search Settings	W
		Search Files	F
		Settings	I
		Share	H
		Snap Left, Right	.
		Cycle Apps	Tab
		App Commands	Z
		Windows Tools	X
		Windows Explorer	E
		Run Command	R
			Ctrl+
	Undo		Z
	Cut		X
	Copy		C
	Paste		V
	Select All		A